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THE WASHINGTON STAR (Green Line)  
6 December 1977

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# Hill Panels Weigh Probes of CIA Role In Saigon Collapse

By Henry S. Bradsher

Washington Star Staff Writer

Both the Senate and House intelligence committees are looking into charges made by former CIA agent Frank W. Snepp III that vital intelligence data was ignored during the collapse of South Vietnam.

Neither committee has decided yet whether to launch a formal investigation of the charges contained in a book published recently by Snepp, entitled "Decent Interval."

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is also checking whether a full-scale investigation is warranted into charges made by John Stockwell, who like Snepp resigned from the CIA. Among Stockwell's charges made public last April was one that CIA operations in Vietnam were "a veritable Catch-22 of unprofessional conduct."

In addition to matters of intelligence gathering and evaluation, Snepp's book also charged that the evacuation of Americans and loyal Vietnamese from Saigon in April 1975 was scandalously mishandled, with thousands of Vietnamese abandoned after promises of U.S. help.

THE SENATE committee is not expected to look into that aspect of Snepp's charges, since they do not deal directly with intelligence operations, according to informed sources. But the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence could decide that the evacuation should be taken up because there are lessons about the use of intelligence to be learned, other sources said.

Widespread allegations of bungling made immediately after the evacuation were denied by the Ford administration, and congressional efforts to investigate them died out in early 1976. There was a general desire in Washington then to forget the American debacle in Vietnam.

Snepp's book has revived the evacuation issue and added allegations that the Nixon and Ford administrations failed to take into account secret information about North Vietnamese intentions in the final offensive that captured Saigon on April 30, 1975.

Snepp also charged that U.S. policymakers were deceived by Hanoi, Moscow, and Hungarian and Polish diplomats in Saigon into believing that a peaceful American withdrawal from South Vietnam would be arranged.

The initial official reaction to the book focused on the question of possible secrecy violations rather than the substance of Snepp's charges.

THE DIRECTOR of the CIA, Adm. Stansfield Turner, has been reported by aides to feel strongly that secrecy requirements need to be tightened to prevent the publication of such books. Snepp, 34, was a key agent in the CIA's Saigon office for the last 2½ years of the war and had access to highly classified information.

When the book was published two weeks ago, Turner asked the Justice

Department to see whether something might be done to halt its distribution and to stop Snepp from making further disclosures.

Justice lawyers decided it was too late to halt the book. But the department's civil division and other divisions began reviewing the possibilities of muzzling Snepp. A civil division recommendation has now been sent to Attorney General Griffin Bell.

The CIA put its standing committee for review of unpublished manuscripts to work on Snepp's book, even though he did not submit it for prepublication review. Random House published it in careful secrecy to avoid the danger of a legal restraining order.

A CIA spokesman said yesterday the review might take another two or three weeks. The committee is checking whether classified material was divulged by the book without proper clearance.

Snepp has said that he published without clearance because the CIA had leaked to favored journalists top secret material on the fall of Vietnam that was selected to present the Ford administration in a good light. He felt this freed him to present the facts as he knew them, he has said.

TURNER BROUGHT up the subject of the book while testifying at a closed session of the House committee on other matters last week. He expressed some strong views on it, sources said, and answered some questions. The committee has submitted further questions in writing.

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